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for industrial work; many of them, especially those of the mountainous districts, are very backward (as are also the Kurds and Ossetes), but the Lesghians and Gruzians are reliable and hard-working, and constitute the best native labour supply. The Armenians, on the other hand, find their most congenial employment in trade and usury, though a good many of them are employed on the oil-fields; the Russian colonists make good agriculturists, but are often idle and intemperate; while the Tatars, who in general are farmers and breeders of sheep and cattle, are also the predominant element on the Baku oil-fields. 463 181

The native labour supply, however, is insufficient for the country's requirements on the oil-fields and elsewhere, and there has been a considerable *immigration* for some years past, the chief sources being as follows: 464 167

(i) *Russian.* — When Transcaucasia came under Russian rule in 1878, the State replaced the many Abkhasians and Circassians who left the country by considerable numbers of Russian colonists. Russian settlers have been planted by the State on the reclaimed lands of the Mughan and Mil steppes. There is a seasonal movement of some 300,000 labourers from Central Russia into Ciscaucasia for the harvest. *Artels*, or combines of Russian skilled workers, numbering from 10 to 50 persons, move about the country undertaking various sorts of contract work, and earn high wages.

(ii) *Armenian.*—Except in the two or three years following the establishment of the Young Turk Government, there has been a steady stream of immigration from Turkish Armenia to the Caucasus. This immigration increased during the persecution of the Armenians in 1915, but the fate of the refugees since the Turco-German occupation of the Caucasus is uncertain. Echmiadzin, in the Government of Erivan, the residence of the Armenian Patriarch, was regarded as the national capital of the Armenians.

(iii) *Turkish* labour is imported for the tea plantations on the Black Sea coast, and for the copper mines in the Batum district.

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464 (iv) *Persians* go to the Baku oil-fields as tub-cleaners,
167 &c.

(v) Induced by the demand for labour on railway construction and other public works, a considerable number of *Italians* immigrated into Transcaucasia about the middle of last century, and remained there in scattered communities. There is also a small seasonal immigration of Italians, chiefly masons, road-makers, and sculptors, which increases whenever new public works are taken in hand.

(vi) A few *Greeks* enter Caucasia, mainly to work in the copper mines.

(vii) There are a few villages inhabited by *German* immigrants of long standing, representing, as in Hungary, early German efforts at colonization.

167 There has been no *emigration* worth mention since the beginning of the present century, except that in 1910 a number of Turkish Armenians returned to their native country, hoping that the Young Turk revolution would secure better political conditions for their race.

(*b*) *Labour Conditions*

466 Since the revolutionary disturbances at Baku in 1902–5 (see above, p. 29) the conditions of labour in the Caucasus have steadily improved, in spite of the difficulties placed in the way of labour organization
468 by the diversity of nationalities involved. There have been frequent strikes. In 1913 manganese miners, case and can factory hands, copper miners at Dzansul, dock labourers at Poti, and the employees of the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company struck for shorter hours, increased pay, and better housing. These movements met with varying degrees of success; an average advance of 30 per cent. in the rate of wages was effected and an eight-hours day was generally conceded. In May 1914 there was a general strike on the Baku fields, the demands including recognition of workmen's committees, better conditions both in the workshops and in the workers'

●464 The manpower necessary to run these new industries is mostly secured from the local population. The North Caucasus, strongly Russified, easily meets its needs. In those industrial areas from which the autochtonous population has been removed in recent periods, as around Groznyy, several hundred thousand new Russian colonists have been brought in and a new economic-administrative unit, the Groznyy Oblast, was formed. The South Caucasus, a densely populated area (at several places over 300 persons per square mile) has even less need of immigrant manpower. Baku has since Czarist times been overfilled with Russians, and to a smaller extent with Armenian workers, who with the local Azeri population are able to run the oilfields, the oil and other industries located around the city. The speedy development of Armenian industry is also connected with the fact that the Armenian SSR has a large number of skilled workers, a circumstance which, in conjunction with the cheap power available, makes this state ideal for industrial development. The fact that the Armenian SSR is on the border is not important with so powerful a country as the USSR.

[697] In addition to "free" labor, there is a presumably large forced labor component in the area; its size is unknown. According to the available data there are three concentration camps in the North Caucasus (Astrakhan', Makhachkala, Nal'chik), and four (Baku, Sal'yany, Sukhumi, Tbilisi) in the South Caucasus. [cf. cat. 116, pp 842-846 --Analyst]